December 24, 1958

Professor B. B. Rossi
Department of Physics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Dr. Rossi:

In our discussion last month of some of the problems facing the organization of scientific studies incosmic exploration you may recall our concern for finding the necessary interest and talent for the development of methods in telemetric chemistry.

It should have occurred to me sooner, but while talking recently to Professor T. Caspersson in Stockholm it suddenly dawned on me that he might embody, in a nearly unique way, just this orientation. He is, of course, well known among biologists as a pioneer in the development of physical methods for microanalysis of cellular constituents — for example, the development and application of ultraviolet microspectrophometry for the analysis of nucleic acids, More remarkably to the point, for the present application, he has also stressed the fullest utilization of automation — I do not doubt he could give you a design now for ana analysis of DNA on the moon (if there were any!) I am sure your colleagues will be able to amplify this suggestion.

Prof. Caspersson is, needless to say, very much aware of the geochemical and biochemical issues at stake; I suspect he has not given serious thought to space science before now in the absence of a Swedish national program in missile research. However, I just mention his name to you in the thought that you might well find an occasion to wish to solicit his technical advice if not a deeper participation on some aspects of the basic science program.

He is the director of the Institute for Cell Research at the Royal Caroline Institute, Stockholm 60.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

P.S. I am moving west in about 3 weeks. I will be quite keen to hear of any critical developments on policy pertaining to microbiology.

P.P.S. What makes some of this testimonial more poignant is that many biologists have perhaps felt that Caspersson was putting perhaps more emphasis on the technical gadgetry than was warranted for the solution of his immediate problems. He has an elaborately equipped institute and not a few people already preoccupied with problems of instrumental microanalysis (e.g. X-ray absorption) which cannot betoo remote from present needs.